The Catalyst

The Newsletter for Interpretation in California State Parks

Summer 1997 **Volume 2 No. 3**

Are you a naturalist? Know the signs!

You Might Be a Naturalist if...

... you have at least one dead animal in your freezer right now.

... you spent the first 5 years out of college hearing relatives ask "when are you going to get a real job?"

... small children tend to follow you wherever you go.

... you have a Stetson that doesn't quite fit.

... people come up to you to ask directions even when you're away on vacation.

... you keep a garbage bag in the trunk just for picking up roadkill.

... you wear khaki even on your day off.

... the books you own weigh more than all of the rest of your furniture put together.

...you own at least one cat that was dumped in a park.

... your parents have a hard time explaining to their friends exactly what you do for a living.

... you take at least three field guides on every vacation.

... there's a real snake stick tucked in the corner of your office.

... you know what a batholith is, or even care.

... you come back to the office and find someone has left a little brown bag on your desk that may or may not move when approached. You know it will contain a snake, large insect, scat or a bug-ridden bird nest.

... you keep a pair of binoculars in your glove box.

... you can work on maggot infested animals without smelling them or ralphing.

... you have been overheard by park visitors while you're talking to birds or barking at sea lions.

... you're no longer nervous speaking before a group of 1,000.

... you've ever been rescued from a grizzly bear attack and your first words were "You upset the food chain!"

... you have a lifetime subscription to Ranger Rick and still no children.

What's Inside

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

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Contributors Guidelines

Catalyst welcomes your original articles of any length! Or, send copies of stories published elsewhere that you think our readers will appreciate. Be sure to include information about the publication so we can get permission to use the material. You may submit an article at any time.

We really appreciate articles submitted on disk or by e-mail. We can read most formats of DOS/Windows disks. Printed manuscripts, facsimile or phone messages are also accepted. Please advise if you would like your diskette returned, otherwise we will recycle it in our office to save postage.

Illustrations are strongly encouraged. Drawings, graphs or other illustrations may be submitted on disk or hard copy. Black & white glossy photos are preferred; color prints or slides sometimes work. All photos and artwork submitted will be returned promptly.

New Interpretive Organization

On January first, 1998 a new international interpretive organization will be born. As a non-profit organization, it will work to bring together interpreters, educators and others involved in any aspect of heritage or resource interpretation – world wide. Its mission is to help advance the international status and image of the interpretive profession by providing cutting-edge information, research, educational support materials and training for its membership in both the private and public sectors.

To have your name added to the mailing list to receive membership information, or if you would like to help in the development of the ISAIC in some way, please contact: ISAIC, PO Box 26095, Lansing, Michigan, USA. Membership details will be mailed out in September.

The Catalyst Committee

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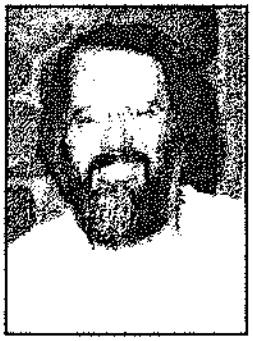
From the Editor



Ready or not, another summer season is upon us. We are pleased to bring you this issue of *Catalyst* just in time for what some have called the "hundred days of hell." I hope you will agree this is a great issue, perhaps even the best *Catalyst* ever!

We've brought together articles about programs and activities in the parks, tips and techniques and things you can use along with several articles that should make you stop and think a bit. My personal favorite is on page 8, titled *Of Tadpoles and Freedom!* Written by Valerie DePrez from the Kane County Forest Preserve District in Illinois, it comes to us from the NAI Region V newsletter *Buffalo Bull.* Some of you may remember Valerie from when she worked at Torrey Pines State Reserve. She can be reached at (874)741-9924.

Be sure to read *Henry Ford's Lessons* on page 6. This information may be important to our very survival! This article comes from Parks Canada where Jack Ricou is Chief of Onsite Heritage Presentation in Hull, Quebec. He can be reached at (819) 994-2747. This article also appeared in *Interpscan*, the national journal for Interpretation Canada.

I'll bet you can relate to the story on page 9, *My Most Recent Time* by Fred Wooley. Fred is a Park Naturalist at Pokagon State Park in Indiana and can be reached at (219) 833-2012. This story also appeared in *Four*Thought, the region 4 newsletter of NAI.

Could you use one more Junior Ranger program? You'll find a complete program outline on page 10 that you can probably use as-is with very little modification. Joanie Cahill is a Park Interpreter Assistant (PI) for Anza-Borrego Desert State Park where she runs the visitor center. She would enjoy hearing from you at (760)767-4205.

Just how much do you know about our state symbol (which is also our department logo)? The article on page 12 by Mary Stokes should help round out your knowledge of the bear facts. Mary is DIS at Four Rivers District and can be reached at (209) 826-1196.

Do you ever have problems with people feeding animals at your unit? If you do, then the article by Janet Didion on page 13 is just for you. Take that information and work it into your interpretive programs and publications. She is with the Resource Management Division and supports using interpretation to solve resource management problems. Janet can be reached at (916) 653-6340.

You won't want to miss the final installment of our ongoing series on Interpretive Communication, *Take No Captives!* by Carolyn Fatooh. Carolyn is with the Pine Ridge Association.

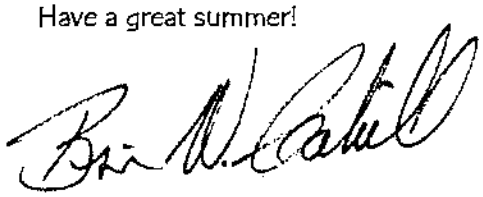
For Doug Harding, *Training Becomes Reality* as the interpretive planning process solved a serious resource management situation at Orange Coast District. Doug explains on page 16. He can be reached at (714)366-8514.

Finally, on page 18, *The Virtual Docent* presents an interesting idea. Jim Berry is at Historic Crossroads Village, Clio, MI and can be reached at JEBerry@aol.com. This article also appeared in *Mooselips*, the newsletter of the NAI Rocky Mountain Region.

Many of you have inquired about the identity of the Master Interpreter. This, of course, can never be divulged. In essence there is a little bit of the Master Interpreter in each of us.

Special thanks to each of you who took the time to tell me what you think about the Catalyst. We always appreciate your comments and suggestions.

Have a great summer!



Brian Cahill, Editor

What's Up?

Interpreters' Resources

Litter-Getters Gets A Facelift!

The Interpretation Section in Sacramento is pleased to announce that State Parks has recently obtained a $50,000 grant from the Department of Conservation to renovate the Litter-Getter Program. There has long been a need for an educational component to "Litter-Getters," and this is the opportunity to develop one. There will be a fun yet informative park-folder-type brochure for kids, a new Junior Ranger Program unit on recycling, and a variety of new incentive awards.

Currently this project is in the planning and design stage. Any ideas or suggestions you may have would be appreciated. Please contact John Werminski at Park Services, (916) 653-8959.

Audubon Camp Scholarships

Remember, Scully scholarships are available for the Audubon Workshop in the Rockies. Your District Interpretive Coordinator has all the details.

Star Programs

If you are a little hesitant about leading star programs, check out this book. *Astronomy for All Ages: Discovering the Universe Through Activities for Children & Adults* by Philip Harrington and Edward Pascuzzi. It has lesson plans for stargazing, constellations, telling time & latitude by the stars, moon, sun and more. The plans are complete with objectives, appropriate age levels, materials, background information and instructions.

Guide Dogs

The Pacific Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center is offering a new three-page guide covering frequently-asked questions about service animals, including: what is a service animal? How can I tell if an animal is really a service animal and not just a pet? Request a copy at (800) 949-4232.

Endangered Species

The US Fish & Wildlife Service has a 28-minute video called *Endangered*, available on free loan. The tape explains the value of preserving biological diversity and ecosystems and the value of the Endangered Species Act. To book the tape or receive a catalog of other environmental videos call Keith (612) 854-5900

Measuring Trees

If you interpret forests and trees, you probably already know how to use a DBH tape. But did you know that you can buy one at WalMart for $5? Look in the tool department for a Stanley measuring tape, model 33-115. The back side of the tape is marked for diameters.

School Programs

Pictured Rocks National Seashore has developed a nine-minute video, *Setting up Education Outreach Programs to Schools*, available on free loan. It takes you through design, content and evaluation and was funded with a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. For information, contact David Kronk at (906) 387-2607.

Signs & Labels

If you're interested in learning more about exhibit labels, you might want to check out the current issue of *Visitor Behavior* (the publication that comes with your membership in the Visitor Studies Association). It contains brief summaries of more than 20 studies about the design and development of exhibit labels.

For more information call: Center for Social Design, P. O. Box 1111, Jacksonville, AL 36265, phone (205) 782-5640.

This organization exists in cooperation with Jacksonville State University and the Anniston Museum of Natural History, and produces some excellent information regarding the evaluation of visitors, visitor motivation and teaching techniques in zoos, parks and museums. There are several Technical Papers that would be of interest to you, all under $5.00 each:

- ❑ *"Science Education for Families in Informal Learning Situations"* by J. White and S. Berry
- ❑ *"Understanding Your Visitors: Ten Factors That Influence Their Behavior"* by S. Bitgood, et al
- ❑ *"Understanding the Public's Attitudes Toward and Behavior in Museums, Parks and Zoos"* by S. Bitgood
- ❑ *"Exhibit Design with the Visitor in Mind"* by D. Patterson, et al
- ❑ *"A Comparison of Formal vs. Informal Learning"* by S. Bitgood
- ❑ *"Suggested Guide for Developing an Exterior Sign Program"* by Randi Korn

Dear Master Interpreter

Dear Master Interpreter,

We used to use lots of moth balls to control pests in our natural history collections (bones, pelts, taxidermy etc.) I read somewhere that moth balls could damage our collections and were dangerous for us to work around. So we quit using them a couple of years ago and now we are starting to get bugs. What can I do?

Bugged Out

Dear Bugged,

Yes there are dangers involved with using moth balls (technically paradichlorobenzene or PDB) especially "generous use" like we used to do. The key today is *integrated pest management,* which involves more than just pesticides. Start with good housekeeping – keep things clean and if possible sealed-up where bugs can't get at them. Check everything periodically so you can catch the first sign of infestation. Also, know your enemy. Find out exactly what kind of bugs you've got. Some bugs can be stopped by just bagging the item and putting it in a freezer for a couple days. Sometimes we still have to resort to pesticides on a more limited basis. But, be sure to read and understand the safety precautions first. If it is a serious infestation or involves valuable collections, get professional help (not necessarily Joe's Pest Control down the road). We have curators in many districts as well as in Sacramento who can give you professional advice.

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,

Every year about this time we start seeing rattlesnakes in the park. I know all the usual precautions about wearing boots and looking before I put my hand anywhere, but frankly I'd like to lock the door and stay in the ranger station until it gets cooler. What can I tell folks about enjoying the park during snake season?

Scared of Serpents

Dear Scared,

It sounds like you have the basics covered. While it is important not to minimize a very real risk, take a look at a composite of the average snakebite victim. Victims are usually male, with sixty percent aged 18-28. Forty percent of the bite victims have a blood alcohol level over .10 and forty percent have tattoos. Fifty percent of all snake bites are non accidental! So ... If you are a young, drunk male with tattoos, look out! Otherwise, exercise normal precautions and enjoy the summer. You are a lot safer there than you are out on the freeway!

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,

We are planning for our new visitor center and we hope to have a small theater to show an introductory AV program. I enjoy photography and really like doing slide programs, but my superintendent thinks we should use a video program. Am I just

-Behind the Times?

Dear Behind,

You might be, but it is not that simple. Look back in your interpretive training notes and you may find a "media matrix" which can help you decide. Here are a few considerations. Do you have room for all that projection apparatus or just enough room for a self-contained video cabinet? How big will the audience be? A rule of thumb is the maximum audience size equals the diagonal measure of the video screen in inches. How generous is your budget? Video will probably cost more. Is there a chance the program information might change? Slide programs are much easier to update.

Take a look at all the factors before you decide. If all other factors are equal, a richly colored Kodachrome slide will always look better than the best video image. Finally, slides and multi-image are mature technologies. That is, the projectors and dissolve units we installed 5 years ago are still considered state-of-the-art. Five-year-old video equipment is practically archaic because the video world is still changing rapidly.

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,

You won't believe this one! An elderly couple stopped to film some bears at Yellowstone and a young bear crawled into their car searching for food. Unable to make the bear leave, the exasperated couple drove about 17 miles to the ranger station with the bear in the back seat. When the husband got out to report the incident, the bear hopped over into the front seat. When investigating rangers arrived the woman was in the passenger seat and the bear was behind the wheel!

Incredulous

Henry Ford's Lessons on Interpretation

by Jack Ricou

Ford Canada Ltd. has an automobile assembly plant in Ontario with a radical new concept for the auto industry: the workers get to build whatever they want. Some like building vans, some Mustangs, some the new Taurus. In fact, the plant is so radical that some of the workers have chosen to build Chrysler and General Motors products. And if you believe that, I've got a nice piece of beach-front property you'd be interested in...

No, such a model wouldn't work with today's mass-produced vehicles... too many parts, too many specialized tools and operations, major headaches with shipping and receiving. One could never produce a vehicle cost-efficiently in this manner (although there are vehicles still built in this manner where cost is no object).

The question here is, "What do Henry Ford and the auto industry have to do with interpretation?" The answer is that in these times of massive change in many of the agencies that employ interpreters, guides or informal educators, it is interesting, if not vital, to look at what we do from a different perspective – in this case, a business perspective. Perhaps there are clues as to how we are seen by our managers or what kind of things we need to do to respond to the changes.

From my perspective, there is one thing we interpreters need to do better – it has to do with "dancing with the one who brung you." The agencies we work for are investing in interpretation for a reason – We, must know what those reasons are and ensure that what we are doing accomplishes key agency objectives.

Let's return to the automobile assembly plant and see what relevance it might have for us. First, let's talk about independence. In the example, the workers had great independence. However, from a business perspective, it wouldn't be efficient or cost-effective to permit this. In the auto industry, few would argue that a company has to maintain control over what factory produces what model, how many, what colors and a myriad of other details.

What about interpreters? Certainly, my perception of the interpretive profession is that we are highly independent – and highly talented and creative. But are we too independent? Are we producing the right products – the ones the agency is paying us to produce? Are we reaching as wide an audience as our agencies need us to reach?

To amplify that last question, let me explain that I work for a government agency. Tax dollars fund the majority of the agency's work and therefore we are ultimately accountable to taxpayers. As a result, I see our public education programming, at least in part, as a long-term investment in maintaining public support so we can continue carrying out our heritage protection and presentation mandate. That dictates that we must reach as wide an audience as possible.

Second lesson from the car plant: corporate identity. Notwithstanding the fact that every major car manufacturer today collaborates with other companies, I can guarantee that every car that comes out of that Ford plant has the Ford name on it. For every product they make, every dealership they open, you can bet that corporate image and their corporate identifiers are a vital and cherished part of their businesses. The same would go for every McDonalds franchise in the world, or for every Disney film or merchandise item produced.

With respect to the agencies we work for, corporate image is just as important on a number of levels. Many of us are public agencies dependent on votes. Taxpayers need to know who to support. (Was that a provincial park or a federal park? Who runs that museum?... that zoo?) With larger heritage agencies, rather than each park and site in the organization competing for support, we can have much greater impact by educating the public on the value of protecting all the agency's heritage. Essentially, we treat the agency like a book and each park or site is a new chapter to be discovered. That way, people will want to make sure the book is around so they have a chance to get to the end. In fact, I believe that each heritage place in the country should be an ambassador for the idea of cultural and natural heritage protection in Canada and beyond.

And just before we leave this topic, I have to say that I still see far too many programs where interpreters get so caught up with the resource or so mesmerized by the artifacts, that they forget to put their program in context... forget to say who they work for and, worst of all, forget to communi-

cate the true significance of the place. For example, suppose we have an incredible blacksmith who can hold the visitors spellbound for hours with his or her artistry and deft communication skills, but at the end of the program the happy visitors still walk away not knowing the historic significance of the place. That is a failure on our part. As resources get tighter and tighter, what decision would you make if you were managing the site? would any business continue to fund an operation that wasn't delivering the messages the workers were paid to deliver?

Next lesson from the car plant: efficiency. The only way manufacturing companies can remain competitive is by being ruthlessly efficient. Are interpreters efficient? Probably most of the time we are, but it is worth thinking about. The other day I had a talk with a park manager. She was amazed that the interpretive staff in one park she has worked at replanned their program from scratch each year. That required a large investment in training and preparation each year. Her point was that with all the reductions, the park simply could not afford that investment any longer. She wanted her staff to find ways of reducing that huge, annual up-front cost.

Regarding a similar situation I was in, we used to retain the best programs and add a few new ones each year. Our whole school program was built on these tried and tested programs. We found that recycling the best programs gave us a couple of other advantages. First, we knew what we were going to offer to schools and we could then put our emphasis on promotion and development of pre- and post-visit materials to complement the onsite programs. Second, new staff have a lot to learn in their first few weeks – information on the resource, communications skills, presentation skills. We found that our canned programs made it easier for them. The themes and objectives for the school programs were very clear and staff could focus energies on creative approaches to delivering the messages.

None of the above suggests that we should have "cookiecutter" programs. It simply suggests that we need to be mindful of giving maximum quality and maximum reach for the dollars our agencies invest in public education.

Final lesson from Henry Ford: effectiveness. You can bet that an automobile manufacturer knows the cost of their products down to the penny. Their effectiveness is measured primarily through sales, through total market share and their share in sales of different classes of vehicles, and through return customers.

Wouldn't it be nice if it was as easy to measure the effectiveness of our programs? It is an area where we need to put more emphasis. We need to know whether the critical messages we are paid to deliver are getting through. We need to know the cost of delivering programs — whether the audience we are after is onsite or offsite. It would also be nice to know how important the interpretive program is to the agency's overall program. For example, are interpretive programs a critical part of the site's attraction? What is the economic impact of the program? What would be the impact of not having an interpretive program? Could investment in new interpretive products or programming actually produce net gains? What type of programming or media yields maximum results for dollars invested? Certainly, if we could answer these questions definitively, we would be in a much better position to manage and defend investment in interpretive programs in the financial climate in which many of our park managers and budget-allocating accountants operate – we could speak to them in the language they understand.

Looking back on the training I received as an interpreter, it seems that the emphasis was on creative approaches keyed to the needs of the audience. That is certainly no less true today. But, in my opinion, we interpreters could spend a lot more time asking our own agencies what it is they need us to do for them. What are the strategic investments the agency should be making in public education and interpretation? Are there particular problems that public education programming can help solve? What is the real significance of the place and are we effectively delivering that message? Are there 'corporate' or agency messages that we must weave into our our programs to foster the kind of public support the agency needs to continue carrying out its mandate?

The bottom line — it's healthy to examine our programs from different perspectives. It can help us create better programs and better understand the needs of the agencies we work for. To Henry Ford and all other business people, thanks for the ideas on interpretation.

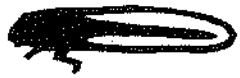
Of Tadpoles and Freedom!

By Valerie DePrez, Kane County Forest Preserve District

It was the quintessential summer day, full and rich and warm and fragrant, with a sky as blue as only the month of June could produce. On my routine walk up the trail to the mailbox, I spotted two young boys, dressed only in shorts, splashing in one of the forest preserve ponds. They were engrossed in something in the shallow water. Bushwhacking in the kids' direction through tall cattails, I greeted them and asked what they were finding. With furtive glances they sized me up to see if I was going to yell at them and boot them out. "Tadpoles," one replied hesitantly. "Uh ... we're making sure they don't get stuck in the mud."

"Wow!" I exclaimed. "Are you finding lots?" My response assured them that they were not in trouble, and the boys enthusiastically showed me the objects of their fascination: tadpoles, toadlets, froglets, dragonfly nymphs, water striders and whirligig beetles. The whole works! We chatted about these aquatic encounters a bit, and then it came time for me to lay down the law. Mumbling about liability and safety and things that were of no concern to eight-year old boys, I told them they had to get out of the pond. In the same breath, however, I encouraged them to continue their tadpole rescue mission at the **edge** of the pond. They agreed, sort of, to stay out of the water, and I went on my way. I had a hunch (later proven true) that they would be waist deep as soon as I was out of sight.

Rules, rules, rules! As a petty bureaucrat, my work is steeped in rules and regulations. I'm responsible for enforcing them; and, for that matter, interpreting them. I get the uneasy sense that our nature preserve and park rules negate what we're trying to accomplish as interpreters. We want visitors to exhibit curiosity, inquisitiveness, a sense of wonder; we want them to make tangible and heartfelt connections; we want them to have the freedom to explore and discover. But do we let them?



Back in the days "when cars had fins and phones had dials," we didn't even wear seat belts in the car. There *were* no seat belts, remember? In the old days, we didn't wear helmets when riding our bikes. There *were* no bike helmets. In those days, we also didn't have elaborate outdoor adventure programs and nature day camps. Ah, but there *were* vacant lots and woods and fields to explore. These were our nature camp, all summer long. In those days, my mom used to let us out the back door with no bike helmets, no sunscreen, no schedule, no itinerary, no idea of exactly where we were going. She'd tell us to be home by dinner. And there were no permission slips or liability waivers to sign.

Things are different now. There have always been accidents, but now we have an epidemic of lawsuits to lay blame on someone when mishaps occur. There have always been diseases, but now there are blood borne pathogens that any kid can get by mucking about at the edge of a woods where spent needles and other nasty stuff may be tossed. There have always been kooks and kidnappers, but now they seem to lurk everywhere. It's a scary world out there; hence, the litany of rules to protect us from life's dangers.

Similarly, we've had to establish a legion of regulations to protect our beleaguered natural areas. We interpreters need to tell visitors, "Stay on the trails, and don't pick flowers, and don't collect feathers, and leave only footprints, and take only memories..." (Perhaps their memories will be that they couldn't touch anything!) With our proof of insurance requirements and signs warning visitors what they can and can't do in our preserves, we parks and programming people must seem like a paranoid (if not anal) lot indeed.

So, what do we say to the kids in the pond? How do we encourage this wonderful thing that they're doing – exploring, learning, loving the natural world in blissful freedom – while enforcing our schizophrenic but necessary rules? It's a challenge to enforce and interpret all of these rules and still encourage the good things, the desired outcomes of interpretation.

I wonder if Robert Frost's parents signed a permission slip for him to be a "swinger of birches" on that path less traveled. Or if Emily Dickinson had her bee sting kit when she contemplated bumblebees. Or if Walt Whitman followed the Nature Preserve Commission's rules while he became "enamored of growing outdoors."

I looked the other way on my return trip from the mailbox. I have high hopes for my tadpole chasers in the pond.

An Interpreter Reminisces

My Most Recent Time

by Fred Wooley,
Pokagon State Park

I really cannot pinpoint my first time. It may have been a high school talk to my field ecology class or some afternoon session on campcraft and woodland lore for YMCA campers in northern Wisconsin or an early walk at Goose Lake Prairie State Park in my first summer interpreter's position in 1977.

I do remember my last time — it was 10:30 a.m. this morning. It was one of those programs that, if it had been my first, I would have known right then what I would do with my life. It was a program that made me say, after over 20 years, "this is still where I want to be."

"Tamaracks are Turning" was just a catchy title for a hike from our park inn to a nearby kettle hole lake and the surrounding wetlands. I use this theme every year and have done hikes to these same wetlands countless times in my 16 years at the park.

This was the first public program I had done in a couple of weeks. I felt rusty from a lack of practice, but was also refreshed by that same lack of practice.

This cold, misty November morning unfolded to a relatively quiet inn. I arrived 15 minutes early, expecting a small group if any. Just before starting time an older couple emerged, smiling. You know the feeling at this point! You match their smile and jump start your brain to meet their enthusiasm.

As we chitchatted, two families walked up. Another older couple appeared and a lone man with a huge grin joined us. By 10:35, we were 13; all exchanging names as we headed out.

Our first stop was to see a suspended oriole nest in a distant tree top. I launched into how it was made and how, with the leaves off, you can see it well. I had not seen it until today. One of the women said it looked like a deflated, hung up balloon .... I slowly turned for a longer look.....

The woman nailed it right on the head! We had a huge laugh. I recovered by relating other interpretive faux pas committed by myself and others over the years. As we moved, I overheard a man say to his wife, "this is going to be a great hike." I knew I had them!

It was one of those hikes where everything clicked. The talk was casual as we walked. I was able to pull things from their past and relate them to what we were seeing and doing. I do not often consciously think of Tilden's principles, but having just returned from the National Interpreter's Workshop and hearing his name often, they were in my mind.

On the floating pier, someone asked about our mammals. This was a perfect lead-in to their discovery of a beaver lodge. I pulled a beaver pelt from my pack. As they reached out to touch it, connections were being made to the beaver's life history and its role in our human history.

I pulled out a glass jar and net to collect some aquatic critters for a nature center display. I pulled their attention to that jar. I then passed it on and the focus moved from me to the group as they pointed out things to each other. I stepped back and smiled. I am always amazed at how each group, although in the same location, takes on a special life all of its own.

On the walk back, the lone hiker sidled up next to me and asked if I recorded my observations and feelings about this location or these hikes. He said if I did not, I should. I knew then that I had made a connection with this man. His name was Peter Stewart and he explained that he played music and recorded it with nature sounds.

At the end of the walk, we said our goodbyes and I retreated to the inn for the less attractive job of cleaning the fish tank. Peter came by and asked if I would be there for awhile. I said yes and he disappeared. He soon returned with a cassette tape entitled "Quiet Time."

"Here, I want you to have this," he said. "I think you will like it." He thanked me again for the hike and was gone.

I played the tape while having lunch. With titles such as "Nature Prelude," "Pure Cricket," and "Winter Morning," it is professionally done. Thank you, my friend. And yes, I will record my observations from this hike. It was not my first time, but my most recent time and it certainly will not be my last.

Jr. Rangers: Bug Party

by Joanie Stadtherr Cahill
Park Interpreter Assistant P.I.
Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

Here's another Jr. Ranger program for anyone who has bugs in their park. It is easy to do and lots of fun for the participants and the leader!

Theme: Insects are important in the web of life.

Kids will gain:

1. An awareness of the immense variety of insects that live in the park's environment.
2. An ability to differentiate between arachnids and insects.
3. An appreciation for the good things insects do for us.
4. The ability to explain why natural places like state parks are important for the survival of insects.

Time: 50 minutes

Location: Outdoors

Supplies:

Booklets and awards
Insect scavenger sheets (one per child)
Crayons (one per child)
Bug boxes (one per child plus a few for leader)
Insect field guide (for leader's use)
1 sheet of paper and 1 marker (for leader's use)

Introduction: **10 min.**

Welcome kids, explain length of program and where parents will retrieve them

➤ Introduce yourself

➤ Have each child tell name, grade, and favorite bug (optional)

➤ Explain Jr. Ranger program, awards, logbook

➤ Introduce today's theme: "Insects are important in the web of life." Ask kids what good or special things that insects do. List the answers on a sheet of paper. Some of the answers could include:

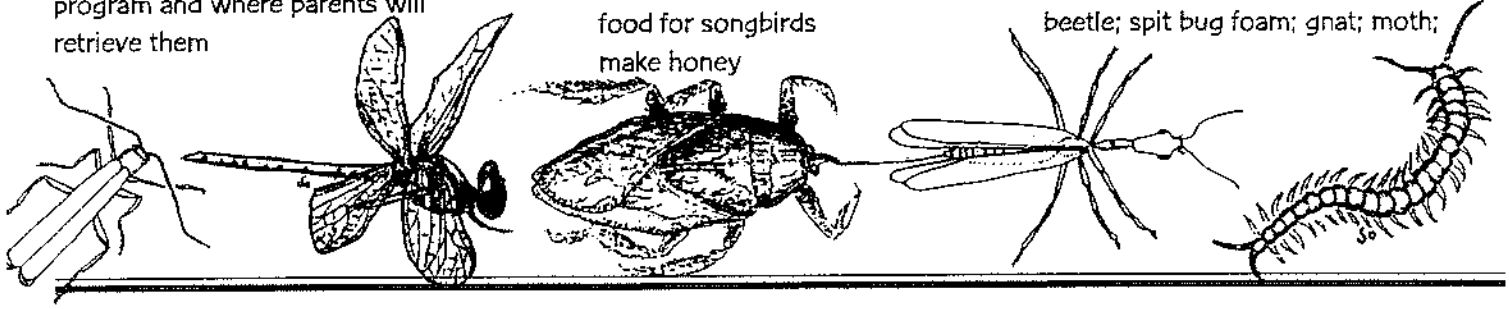
- pollinate crops
- food for animals
- make silk
- live everywhere
- decompose stuff
- can do metamorphosis
- aerate soil
- natural pesticides
- food for songbirds
- make honey

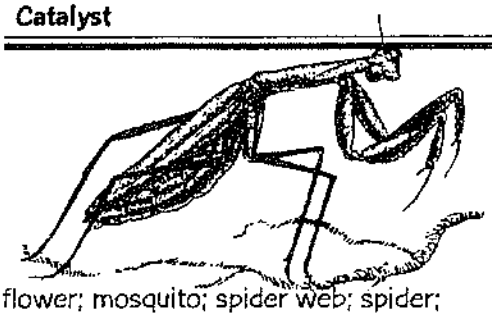
Main Part of Program

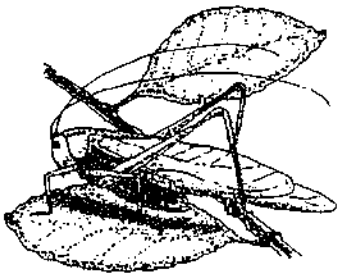
Bug Awareness Hunt: 10 min.

Have kids work in alone or in partners or threes. Give each a scavenger hunt worksheet and a crayon. Go outside to a pre-selected area and tell kids they may go anywhere in the area as long as they can see you at all times. Tell them you will blow a whistle (or something) when their time is up. Kids will have **FIVE** minutes to find as many of the items on their sheet as they can. Briefly discuss with them where they might look.

My scavenger hunt sheet contains the following 16 items: grasshopper; beetle; spit bug foam; gnat; moth;







flower; mosquito; spider web; spider; insect eggs; nibbled leaf; bee; butterfly; ant; bird; cocoon. Wait five minutes, helping and motivating, then call kids back to the group.

Review the scavenger sheet. Ask kids "Who was able to find a .....?" "How many of you found a nibbled leaf?" Draw some conclusions about what was easy to find, what was most numerous, etc. and why.

Bug Search: 20 min.

Explain that each child will be given a bug box. Their job will then be to collect one insect (without hurting it) and bring it back to the group. Tell the kids any information they need to know about dangerous bugs in your area. (i.e., don't pick up any black widow spiders.) Show them that they can actually scoop a bug into a box without touching it if they want to.

Kids who find a bug right away should be encouraged to help others. When everyone has a bug, get the group together in a circle. Ask them to look closely at their creature. Ask them to raise their hand if their bug has six legs. Then ask them to raise hands if the bug has eight legs. Ask about wings, eyes, antennas, etc. Tell group the difference between an insect (usually six legs and three body parts) and an arachnid (usually eight legs and two body parts). Have each child tell whether their bug is an insect or arachnid. Then pass bugs around the circle so everyone can look at everyone else's.

Have the children GENTLY put the bugs back where they got them. If you have extra time, have them collect a second bug that was different from the first.

Conclusion: **10 min.**

Sit in a circle. Ask them what the world might be like without insects. Ask them why state parks are important places for wildlife, including insects. Encourage them to spend five minutes in their backyards or schoolyards searching for bugs. Conclude by restating the theme. Hand out booklets and stamp. Have kids say the Jr. Ranger pledge with you. If there's extra time, have them draw their favorite insect in the logbook.

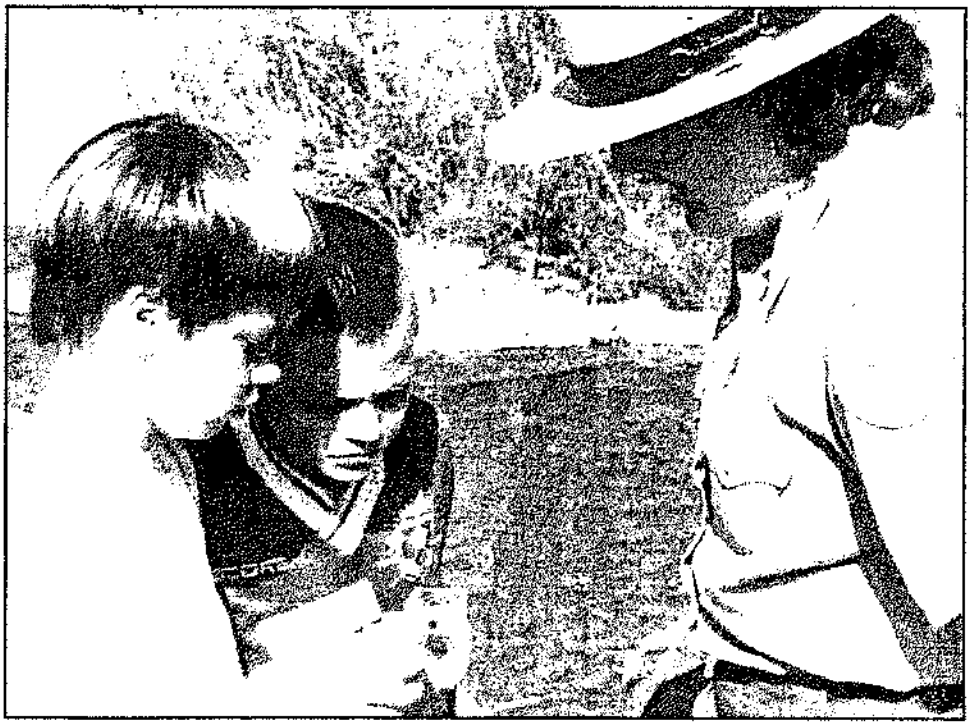
Resources

The Bug Book by Robin Bernard; published by Scholastic Professional Books. Has a great scavenger sheet and other hands-on activities as well as background information.

For bug boxes: Acorn Naturalists; lucite magnifying chambers, $1.49 each. 1-800-422-8886.

The Insect Almanac, A Year Round Activity Guide by Monica Russo; published by Sterling Publishing Co. NY.

The Practical Entomologist by Rick Imes; published by Simon and Shuster



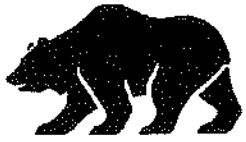
Hopefully kids will learn why natural places like state parks are important for the survival of insects as well as an appreciation for the good things insects do for us.

Bear Footin'

By DIS Mary Stokes

There's a new bear in town but you may not have noticed the change. According to a recent management memo, the signature bear on State Park publications will henceforth step out confidently with his/her left front paw forward, rather than hesitate with both left paws in the center at the same time. (see illustration) Science has apparently prevailed over art at DPR: the biologists hint that a wide-bodied animal like a bear would have a serious wobble if it walked like our old logo.

Does life really imitate art? We can only hope that the whole department will soon be making tracks like our fearless logo, marching solidly into the new millennium. But how much do you know about the critter that you wear on your sleeve? Has he/she got the footwork right? Test your knowledge of our logo the State Mammal, "the California bear that isn't there," on the following:



CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS
90s Bear

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS
Bear for a New Millennium

Grizz Quiz

1. True or False: Though their coats can vary from black to cinnamon, all wild bears in California today are black bears *(Ursus americanus)*.

2. True or False: The North American brown bear or grizzly *(Ursus arctos)* is the largest living terrestrial predator in the world.

3. Scientists estimate that when the first Europeans arrived in North America, the western part of the continent was home to

a) 20,000
b) 50,000
c) 100,000 grizzlies.

4. After more than 10,000 years as the dominant predator on the landscape, in the interval between 1850-1920 the North American brown bear was eliminated from ____ of its former range.

a) 60%
b) 85%
c) 95%

5. Some Yankees in Mexican California came to be called *Los Osos* (the bears) by their *Californio* hosts because

a) they were fierce and dangerous fighters
b) they came out of the mountains dressed in furs
c) they preferred to sleep through the winter

6. True or False: The original bear flag raised at Sonoma in 1846 was painted with rust and blackberry juice by a nephew of Mrs. Ulysses Grant.

7. True or False: The grizzly bear flag was first adopted by the California legislature in 1911.

8. True or False: At one time California produced the biggest inland bears and the densest population of grizzlies on the continent.

9. The last California grizzly of record was shot in

a) Tulare County
b) El Dorado County
c) Modoc County

10. *Ursus arctos* became extinct in California in

a) 1892
b) 1911
c) 1922

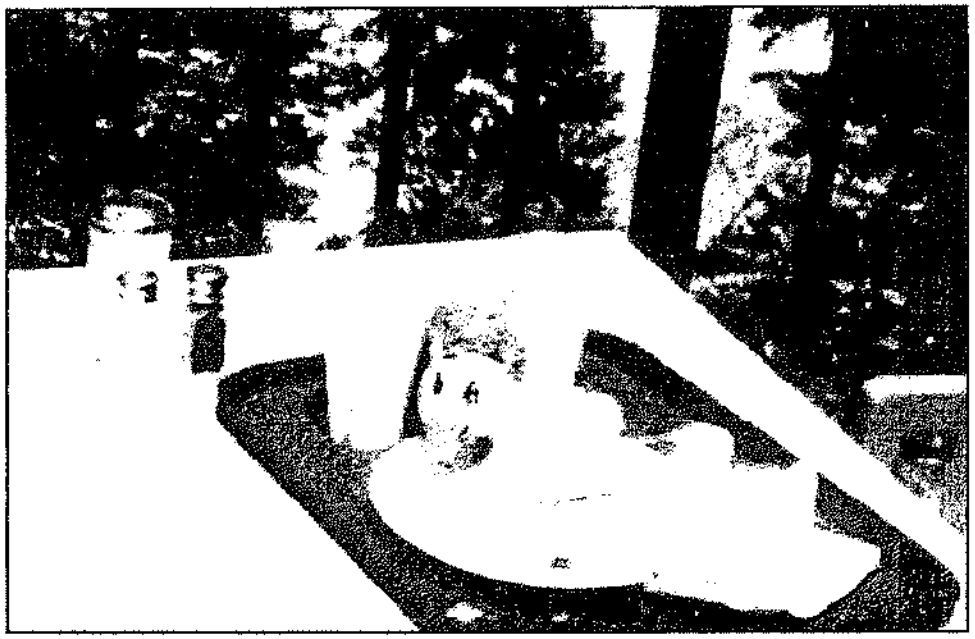
For more on the golden bear of California see *"Once There Were Bears"* by Doug Peacock in *Pacific Discovery Magazine*, Summer 1996 issue.

Answers
1. True
2. True
3. C
4. C
5. B
6. False (William Todd, a nephew of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, painted the flag.)
7. True
8. True
9. A
10. C

Talk to the Animals, But Don't Feed Them!

By Janet Didion

There are many problems with feeding an animal, any animal, in a park. We know that human food is different from the foods animals would get naturally – our food is less nutritious and they have different needs. Unfortunately they can often get more of our food than the foods they would normally eat. The human foods animals get (mostly our snack foods – imagine a diet of only potato chips and popcorn!) are contaminated with the preservatives and other additives that we humans feel we need in our foods.



Human food availability affects the activity patterns, foraging behavior, and territorial behavior of the fed animals like this ground squirrel.

Beyond food quality and quantity, the **WAY** animals obtain the food is unnatural – human food is regularly available in a few places, such as the picnic area, and this affects the activity patterns, foraging behavior, and territorial behavior of the fed animals. Nocturnal animals have become active during the day when people are around. They look in garbage cans and beg for food when they would normally be rustling up grub in the bushes and trees. They congregate when they naturally wouldn't – sometimes in areas that are unsafe for them, such as roadsides. There may be "food fights" with increased competition for food between animals that would not naturally be found together, and injured or sick animals may be attracted to the easy pickings, encouraging the spread of disease.

Fed animals may secondarily attract animals that prey upon them- and some of these predators we may not want to attract! Or fed animals, unnaturally increased in numbers, may prey upon other animals or plants at unnaturally high levels, causing damage to the habitat or other animal populations.

Animals fed by humans, either intentionally or through improper food and garbage storage, will identify humans with food and lose their fear of humans. They may approach humans and even bite the hand that feeds them, or they may become aggressive panhandlers and end up harassing people. With the added food source, the numbers of animals may increase far above natural levels. Burrowing animals may undermine foundations of buildings, trails, or other facilities. Picking up scattered garbage and repairing structures is time-consuming and costly, and eventually some sort of population control measures often need to be taken, never a pleasant or popular job.

But one of the most important effects is the misperception people get about how animals live. While it is fun for us to see animals up close and to watch them eat, begging and being dependent upon humans for food during the summer months, (then possibly going hungry once people leave) is not the way these animals were designed to survive. They are adapted to fill a certain niche in their habitat, and this is not it; they were not meant to live this way. We are creating generations of animals addicted to human food sources – do you want to be part of that? You can help with this problem

JUST SAY NO

to feeding animals,
and secure your food properly.
Mother Nature will thank you,
and you'll be glad you did.

Interpretive Communication (last of three articles)

Take No Captives!

by Carolyn Fatooh

In the first two articles of this series, I covered theme and organization. Now, assuming you've decided what ideas you want to get across to your audience, and how to organize those ideas, how do you keep that audience interested in getting your message?

At the risk of losing my audience, I will repeat yet again Dr. Sam Ham's four essential qualities of interpretation. They are:

1. Interpretation is *enjoyable.*
2. Interpretation is *relevant, meaningful & personal*
3. Interpretation is *organized.*
4. Interpretation is *thematic.*

While having a theme is the most important quality of interpretation, and organization is vital to convey that theme, the first two essential qualities can take up most of your time in preparing an interpretive presentation.

One mistake commonly made in interpretive presentations is treating the audience as if it were in a formal class. A captive audience is one which has to be there and gets some external reward – for example, a grade, license or money. A captive audience must pay attention in order to get that reward, even if bored, and will accept a more formal, academic approach.

Our audiences for interpretation are (usually) **noncaptive audiences.** The participants are there by choice, and will stay and pay attention as long as they get the internal reward of interesting information presented in an entertaining fashion; or until something better to do comes along. Noncaptive audiences expect a more informal, nonacademic approach.

If we make our interpretation enjoyable, relevant, meaningful, and personal, we can hold a non-captive audience and get the theme across.

You don't have to be a stand-up comic to make your presentation enjoyable. There are a number of straightforward techniques that anyone can use to increase the entertainment value of technical information. The first is the simplest: smile! According to Dr. Ham, a smile helps your audience feel more comfortable even if the subject is serious.

Another technique is to use active verbs to liven up your presentation. Verbs are the most exciting words for people, especially active verbs. Avoid trying to sound pseudo-scientific by using passive voice. For example, why say "The geological samples were taken by our field study group?" There's nothing wrong with "We dug up the rocks."

Try to show cause-and-effect: people like to know what causes other things to happen.

You could also link a scientific subject to human history. For example, on a wildflower walk people love to hear how plants were used by Native Americans or early European settlers.

Use a "vehicle" to make your topic more interesting. Some examples of vehicles are:

Exaggerate size: "Imagine what we would see if we were small enough to crawl down this tarantula's hole."

Exaggerate time scale: This is especially effective with geologic time- "If time were speeded up so a thousand years passed in a second, you could watch the Coast Ranges rising up."

Use an overriding analogy: This is an analogy that your entire presentation revolves around (e.g, comparing forest succession to the building of a house).

Use a contrived situation: pose a hypothetical problem or set up an illustrative situation. ("What if there were no predators?" "Imagine you've traveled back a million years in time.")

Use personification: Give selected human qualities to nonhuman things; for example, "What would trees say if they could talk?" Empathy makes this technique work. Be careful to not imply that plants and animals really think and act like people; but even very young children can separate reality from dramatization.

Focus on an individual: Instead of talking about the breeding habits of acorn woodpeckers in general, you could follow the life history of "Woody" and his family. This technique also draws on your audience's empathy.

How important is it to make your interpretation relevant and meaningful? We all learn things only in the context of something we already know. We must have a bridge between the familiar and the unfamiliar. Three bridges we can use between the familiar and unfamiliar are examples, analogies, and comparisons.

Examples: Quickly refer to something or someone that is like, or in some way represents the kind of thing or person you're talking about. ("The buckeye is an example of a plant which is pollinated by butterflies.")

Analogies: Show many similarities of the thing you're talking about to some other thing that is highly familiar to the audience. ("To understand the Franciscan Complex, think of a pudding being stirred up with different fruits and nuts.")

Comparisons: Point out a few of the major similarities and/or differences between the thing you are talking about and something else which can be related to it. ("The Ponderosa and the Grey Pine are both evergreens with bunches of long needles. But notice how the Grey Pine trunk branches instead of having one main trunk all the way up.")

One more point to keep interpretation relevant and meaningful—avoid using and teaching technical terms unless absolutely necessary.

Essential quality #2 also says interpretation must be personal. If you are giving a presentation in person to a small group you already know, you could use people's names and refer to information you have about them. In a small group of strangers, you could learn names and a little personal information. But what if you're speaking to a group of fifty, or your interpretive message is conveyed via a museum display or pamphlet? Luckily, there are other ways to personalize your presentation.

You can use positive, neutral or negative labels so your audience can identify themselves as in or out of the group you're, referring to:

"People who care about the environment..." — positive group ("I'm one of them.")

"People who live in Santa Clara County..." — neutral group (no positive or negative value attached to being in this group).

"People who aren't respectful of others..." — negative group ("I'm not one of them." — use carefully; you could offend someone who thinks they're being included in a negative group!)

You can also use self-referencing. The idea of self-referencing is to encourage the members of your audience to connect their own experiences with your interpretive message. Some examples of self-referencing are:

"Think of the last time you..."

"Have you ever..."

"How many of you have ever..."

One last technique to personalize verbal communication is eye contact. Many of us learned in public speaking classes to make eye contact with one person in the back of the room, or let our eyes roam the room not really looking at anyone. Dr. Ham suggests that it is more effective to make eye contact with a number of people in the audience in different parts of the room as your talk progresses, in order to draw the whole audience in.

Using some of these techniques and a little imagination will make your interpretive communication enjoyable, relevant, meaningful and personal. Your noncaptive audience will be captivated!

Sam Ham practices what he preaches. His workshop on Practical Interpretive Methods had all five of the essential qualities, and was just plain fun, too. His book, *Environmental Interpretation: A Practical Guide for People with Big Ideas and Small Budgets* is also full of information and fun to read. Most of the material covered in these articles is in chapters one and two. The rest of the book gives more detailed ideas especially pertinent to different types of interpretation.

Critical Resource Issues

Training Becomes Reality

By Doug Harding

Three team members from the Orange Coast District attended the Southern Division Workshop held in Idyllwild in May of this year. The theme for the workshop was interpreting critical resource issues. As luck would have it, when the room was divided into five subgroups by counting-off, we all ended up in the same group. When we assembled with the four other members of our group we all agreed to work on one of the many resource issues facing Orange Coast. The issue selected was habitat protection for the Pacific Pocket Mouse.

Now, you might ask, "What in a Rat's ___ is a Pacific Pocket Mouse, and who cares?" This smallest of mice was believed to be extinct for almost forty years until it was rediscovered at Dana Point in 1995. It has since been discovered at two additional locations in northern San Diego County, one of which is in San Onofre State Park, adjacent to the town of San Clemente. One thing for sure is that this mammal likes high-priced real estate; another is that it's fraught with controversy.

Our group worked through the worksheet diligently. Different members focused on particular areas which gave us a good blend of ideas. The matrix was very valuable as it guided us through all the essential phases. I was anxious to make our presentation the next day because I felt that the group had done an outstanding job. Our group presentation went well with a great deal of audience participation. The workshop adjourned with a unanimous consensus that it was well worth the effort and time we committed.

As I settled back into my eclectic routine at the Orange Coast District, a major crisis erupted over the Pacific Pocket Mouse habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service contacted Dave Pryor, our Resource Ecologist and training participant, threatening fines and sanctions for allowing this habitat to be disturbed. A meeting was set up at the mouse site with U.S.F.& W., the Department of the Navy (who we lease from), and State Parks as participants. Pryor had other commitments and was unable to attend so Chief Ranger Mike Tope, Maintenance Chief Don Castle and I represented State Parks.

A major crisis erupted over the Pacific Pocket Mouse habitat, with threats of fines and sanctions for allowing this habitat to be disturbed. One thing for sure is that this mammal likes high-priced real estate!

The new impact on this area was hardly visible, but it was apparent that the area was increasing in popularity among B.M.X. bike users. It did seem that the biologists in the group were concerned with the Pocket Mouse helping to avert a proposed toll road through this location. The other agencies wanted to know what our plan was for managing the area. This was the fun part. Since we had developed a great plan with outstanding strategies, we were in a position to elicit the thoughts and some hidden agendas from the others as we addressed their concerns. The U.S.F.&W. was satisfied with our plan and accepted our time line. Now we needed to implement our plan.

The plan was to enlist local citizens to help control use of the site. Also boundaries needed to be defined and delineated so that the allowable use in the area could continue. A team was assembled at the district to map out our implementation strategy. Our team consisted of Chief Ranger Tope, Resource Ecologist Pryor, Ranger Gilbert, and Interpreter Harding. Using information from our previously developed worksheet, we devised an all-encompassing plan.

We were combining some traditional approaches with several modern techniques. We decided that we did not have the resources to solve this dilemma alone nor could we afford to alienate the community. Ranger Fulvio was assigned to the area to talk to the user groups and prohibit the undesired activities. Three strand fences were placed at strategic locations establishing closed areas. Signs were posted

A meeting was held at the mouse site with U.S.F.& W., the Department of the Navy (who we lease from), and State Parks as participants. Chief Ranger Mike Tope, Maintenance Chief Don Castle and Doug Harding represented State Parks.

announcing our plans to hold a town meeting at the location.

A town meeting was held with all the team members present. Sixty-five local residents attended, including city park directors, B.M.X. bicyclists, hikers, anti-tollroad protesters, and representatives for U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Navy. Mike Tope explained our dilemma as delicately as possible without pinpointing exactly where each of the threatened or endangered species was located. The audience began asking questions and making statements. Over fifty comments from the audience were charted and responded to. The standard comment from a teenager was, "there is nothing for us to do," which City Parks took exception to. The audience was very receptive and complimentary toward our meeting. They made several positive comments about the meeting and the fact that State Parks had included and listened to them.

One suggestion from the audience was an interpretive walk through the area. Pryor and I agreed to follow up with the walk, which we did a month later. The local citizens agreed to assist us as a habitat watch group. They report activities that may be detrimental to our mission. Working together, communicating effectively, including everyone, and having a well-thought-out-plan in advance, we managed to resolve a major problem. This success helps demonstrate that our training and enlightened approach to new challenges can indeed guide us into the twenty-first century.

The Virtual Docent

By Jim Berry

Docent programs present an administrative challenge to get the collection of skills, personalities, and individual schedules to reliably cover program needs. How many of us have wished for a kind of ideal interpreter, docent, or guide who, like the holographic doctor in the latest Star Trek series, would always be on standby? In the true sense of the word "virtual", this helper would possess attributes and capabilities not normally present in the same person. There are now organizations with virtual capabilities that never would have been thought to be possible a few years ago. The key to their success has been the application of computer technology to network capabilities for a greater effect. The virtual docent concept is not science fiction, but a real possibility of extending the essence of docenting through the use of web page technology.

Traditional docenting has always possessed virtual qualities. Universities welcomed these guest lecturers when no one on the faculty could provide their particular expertise. Art museums could present more of their collections with flexible docents than with just the curatorial staff. Today's docent programs involve continuous learning and reconfiguring, the exact qualities being sought by the teams working among virtual corporations (see William H. Davidow and Michael S. Malone, *The Virtual Corporation*, New York, Harper Business, 1993). Maintaining a docent team demands administrative attention, even though good programs can develop a life of their own in attracting and motivating their membership. Personal computers have helped relieve some of the administrative unruliness associated with scheduling and record keeping, but have not yet been used to develop the collaborative potential of docents.

Virtual docenting is the networked potential of all docent contributions. It is the interaction of the World Wide Web resized to work within your organization and community. Internet connection is not necessarily required, because the hypertext markup language (HTML), out of which web pages are constructed, will work on local area networks, can be exchanged on floppy disks, and can be used within the hard drives of shared individual computers. HTML is modular, like Lego blocks, allowing many hands in the creation of docent training materials, mentoring arrangements, and web-based community outreach. Web page docenting transcends time and place limitations that constrain participation of some docents. Finally, web technology transports the docent's work into homes and schools that, at least, have a PC running browser software.

These examples show how technology can extend, rather than replace, the interpersonal aspect that is basic to docenting. Docenting will continue to be a hybrid of techniques and resources.

The author would love to hear from interpreters in California State Parks. Tell him how you use or would like to use the computer in your organization (be specific as to hardware and software if you can). Jim Berry can be reached at JEBerry@aol.com.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS.

150 EXCHANGE.

HUZZAH! HUZZAH!! HUZZAH!!!

California State Parks is about to launch its first STATEWIDE PASSPORT PROGRAM, thanks to a very generous donation from P. G. & E. and support from the California State Parks Foundation. The program is designed to help visitors explore the PLACES WHERE HISTORY-MAKING EVENTS OCCURRED DURING 1846 AND 1847. In addition to learning about 22 California State Parks sites from descriptions and maps, passport holders will be able to officially "validate" and chronicle their visits, using specially designed rubber stamps. Participating park units will display DISTINCTIVE STAMPING STATIONS in their visitor centers or museums. Validations will be free of charge to park visitors, but visitors must stop at each site in the program to have them stamped. The Passport will become a unique PERSONAL KEEPSAKE of this special commemorative period. (Passports will be available for a nominal charge and will offer no discounts on entrance fees.)

PASSPORT NUMBER 2 WILL BE BIG!

Another, much larger PASSPORT (possibly 100-150 sites) is envisioned for release in 1998. It will focus on CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS AND OTHER HISTORIC SITES having a relationship to the GOLD RUSH and STATEHOOD. District Interpretive Coordinators are responsible for submitting names and appropriate information to the Sesquicentennial Coordinator for inclusion in the next program. Organizations involved with the California Roundtable on Recreation (U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, etc. etc.) will also be involved and have sites included in the Passport. This is but one of several cooperative programs being offered during the CALIFORNIA SESQUICENTENNIAL that will take a "seamless" approach to interpretation.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE ☞

SESQUICENTENNIAL COORDINATOR APPOINTED.

On March 1, 1997, Mary A. Helmich was appointed Sesquicentennial Coordinator for California State Parks. She has a number of initiatives in the works. If you have suggestions, questions, or can help her in any way, please give her a phone call at (916) 653-3913.

VIDEO ON 1846 EVENTS NEARING COMPLETION.

We have it on good authority that the VOICES OF 1846, one of several films being produced by California 2000, a nonprofit history curriculum project, is nearing completion. The project offers educational kits containing original films, primary source readings, historical maps, and lesson plans that complement the state's adopted History-Social Science Framework and brings history to life through dramatizations based upon first-hand accounts.

SESQUICENTENNIAL THEMES.

A REMINDER: PARKS-150 HAS ESTABLISHED FOUR PRINCIPAL THEMES to be used in the Sesquicentennial Commemoration. These should serve as the basis for programs within California State Parks:

- → The surge of Gold Rush adventurers and entrepreneurs from around the world impacted and transformed California's already diverse mix of cultures.
- → Gold strikes brought new technology to California and inspired innovation in mining and other fields of endeavor.
- → In the uncertain transition from Mexican to American sovereignty, Californians organized their own government and established a state.
- → The Gold Rush caused serious environmental impacts, not only from mining, but also through associated growth and resource exploitation.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS:

THE HEART AND SOUL OF CALIFORNIA!S SESQUICENTENNIAL.

California's Tapestry

A Section of *The Catalyst* Office of Community Involvement Issue #6 - Summer '97

What Is Multicultural Education About?

By Jack Shu

In the past few years I've pointed out parallels between environmental education (E.E.) and social science education. Here is one that may be useful when piecing together the components of a program about our tapestry of cultures.

When E.E. was described by UNESCO in 1977, five steps were identified: 1) Awareness; 2) Knowledge; 3) Understanding; 4) Skills; 5) Action. The California Department of Education shortened it in 1990 to these three goals: 1) foster awareness of the interdependence of all life and the need to have values and behavior compatible with the total environment; 2) develop knowledge about ecological principles and the biophysical environment; and 3) help students learn how to make decisions and take action to solve environmental problems. E.E. is more than simply learning about nature and environmental problems. This model helps to link lessons and topics together toward a purpose.

The same model can be used for multicultural education. There are lessons which make us aware of the fact that our culture is made up of many different cultures and that we as individuals are likewise multicultural. We may learn about Mexican-American culture or Chinese-American culture, both from their histories and content, thus developing a knowledge base.

But multicultural education does not stop there. We need to understand how these cultures can keep their identities as well as contribute to what we may call the "California culture." Developing skills to live in communities that are multicultural would be another component. This involves certain principles such as respecting others and caring for the future of our society.

Just as in E.E. the last goal is the most difficult: developing lessons that lead people to make responsible decisions and to take actions which benefit society. Presenting lessons which involve action is very important because it is through action that people find meaning and learn the most. This "action" also provides an effective assessment of what are the benefits of multicultural education.

A word of caution — multicultural education should not be equated with international studies. There is a difference between studying the culture of Japanese-Americans and studying the culture of Japan. Being a world traveler does not necessarily make someone good at cross-cultural issues in America. Cultures constantly evolve and change with successive generations after a family has left the country of its origin. For example, California Rolls (a type of sushi) are unique to us.

Well, how can all this be applied to State Parks? I think it helps to visualize that when we interpret a part of California's history, we are contributing toward a meaningful process. Learning that Chinese-American laborers worked in the town of Cuyamaca next to Stonewall mine in the 1890s should not be a simple "factoid." This knowledge, when presented as part of an integrated program, can help people to understand, develop skills and take responsible actions in our multicultural community.

In this regard, we, along with other educators, need to work toward completing all the goals of multicultural education. Making our interpretive programs a part of the entire process elevates their value and gives our resources more meaning.

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